

PANORAMA



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SPECIAL REPORT:

DELUGE OF WOES

MASTER OF HIS UNIVERSE:
RIDLEY SCOTT
ON-SET

SPORT:

SYMPATHY
AMID SCANDAL

IN FOCUS:

SYMBOL OF
RESILIENCE

ROCK
DADDIES
STARS' PARENTING WAYS

A REMARKABLE PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

by Indrani Mishra



RAMADAN

A month of great religious importance in the Muslim culture, Ramadan is observed by Muslims all over the world. Though the principal teachings of Ramadan – i.e., to fast, read the Quran and to help those in need – remain quite the same for all, people blend their own local cultural customs with Islamic traditions.

Providing glimpses of the local (UAE) perspective on the many unique traditions and customs that characterise this very special time of the Islamic year is a photography exhibition titled "Life in Ramadan." The annual exhibition is running at the Maraya Art Centre, Al Qasba, Sharjah. Bringing colourful insights into the life



REFLECT!ONS

of UAE residents during Ramadan, the exhibition shows the daily events and common scenes that mark the Holy Month.

Life in Ramadan is put together by the Emirates Photography Society, and showcases the works of 13 of the country's finest photographers. With their photographs the artists have recorded a visual history of how the UAE's multicultural community joins in the spirit of love and worship to honour Islamic heritage in modern times.

While some of the pictures are simple, others are vivid, thought provoking and even amusing. The photographs – in various sizes and shades – shows people praying, indoor and outdoor, as well as intimate shots of family and social gatherings. The images also portray the reli-

Photos by Nisham A Manaf



Naser Ali Naser

gious and the social dimensions of Ramadan: charity and welfare for the poor. A mixture of colour and black and white images, the collection clearly conveys the message of Ramadan.

Elaborating on the exhibition, Ammar Al Attar, the PR Manager of the Emirates Photography Society, says: "The exhibition is being organised yearly since the past two years. This year, we have organised it in collaboration with the Maraya Centre because of the exposure it provides. We want people to come, see and appreciate our work. And what better place to exhibit our work than the Maraya Centre which is located at the heart of Sharjah.

"Entries into the exhibition were invited from participants of all nationalities," says Al Attar, giving details about the participants and their works. "There were 48 participants out of which 14 artists were selected to exhibit their works. The selected works show all the elements of Ramadan.

"The collection promotes the ever-increasing number of UAE-

based photographers who are starting to make a name for themselves as well as strengthen the connection between art and the local community." Apart from being the curator of the show, Al Attar, a passionate photographer, is also one of the artists showing his work at the exhibition. He has

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one work in display — a video installation that shows the night (*Taraweeh*) prayers during the holy month of Ramadan. Pictured at the King Faisal mosque near the Old Souq Sharjah, the video shows pictures of people of all ages performing their *Taraweeh* prayers.

"Taraweeh are special evening prayers performed after *Isha* (the last evening prayer), during which long portions of the Quran are read. The prayer can be very long, which could extend to well

over an hour," he elaborates.

The continuous colour video has b/w interlude, which according to Al Attar is the break between the prayers. "In fact, the video is a collection of 500 pictures. It has been made into a video by using the time-lapse technology."

Going around the exhibition hall, Al Attar reveals that this year's exhibition is exceptional as it includes the work of many new and young artists. Naser Ali Naser — one such young artist — has an



Ammar Al Attar



unusual way of looking at things. The 16-year-old who hails from Abu Dhabi says a lot with two of his photographs that are on display.

In one — *Some People in Ramadan* — Naser brings in the importance of food during Ramadan. Giving it a touch of humour, he captures his own picture jumping on food that's kept ready as one gets ready to break the fast.

"I conceived the idea from my personal everyday experience," he says, "so what's better than to capture myself in the perfect mood." "I've done that through the auto click mode," he elaborates. "Generally this is what happens during Iftars. Whether we agree or not, food plays a very important role and all of us wait for Iftars."

Another young artist, Mansoor Hamed Saeed Almanaiee, captures the serene ambience of an old mosque in Egypt in his b/w

Mansoor Hamed Saeed Almanaiee



picture entitled *Peace and Quiet*. Almanaiee, in his photograph, captures a lone man reading the Quran at one corner of the 600-year-old mosque. The body language of the man speaks of his total surrender to the Creator.

"The calm and the peaceful environment of mosque fascinated me. For me Ramadan is all about attaining peace by reaching out to the Almighty, and the picture of the man engrossed in reading exudes just that," he explains.

A student of Engineering in the Institute of Technology, Almanaiee is very passionate about this art form, and has won many awards for his photographic skills. "I want to tell my stories and photogra-

phy is my means. I love photography and the magical power it has."

The exhibition also includes works of other artists such as Omar Abdulla Bafaraj, Omran Alansari and Anmar Tarik that shows some of the most amazing photos reflecting the true spirit of Ramadan.

"*Life in Ramadan*" began on Aug. 22, will continue at the Maraya Art Centre, Al Qasba, until Sept. 18.

